



US Army Corps  
of Engineers

# PUBLIC NOTICE

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Regulatory Branch  
333 Market Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105-2197

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## CHANGE IN LEAD FEDERAL AGENCY FOR DELINEATIONS OF WETLANDS ON AGRICULTURAL LANDS

As of March 13, 1998 the Regulatory Branch of the San Francisco District Corps of Engineers will no longer accept applications for Section 404 Clean Water Act (CWA) permits on **AGRICULTURAL LANDS** outside the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties without a certified U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) wetland delineation. All future requests for wetland jurisdictional delineations on agricultural lands for both Section 404 CWA and Food Securities Act- "Swampbusters" should be directed to the local NRCS District Conservationist. Jurisdictional delineations on agricultural lands for Sec. 404 CWA applicants will continue to be mapped at a suitable scale with supportive documentation to assess wetland impacts before the Corps can evaluate a Section 404 CWA permit application. The Corps will complete any "Other Waters" delineations including lakes, ponds, streams and intermittent streams within the project boundary that are not included on the NRCS finalized wetland delineation map. This change in the lead federal agency for delineation of wetlands on agricultural lands is the result of the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (FAIRA96) and the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA){see attachment 1}, "Concerning the Delineation of Wetlands for the Purposes of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Subtitle B of the Food Securities Act- January 1994".

The January 1994 MOA directs the U.S.

Department of the Army (Corps), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Interior (Fish and Wildlife Service-F&WS) to recognize the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service as the lead federal agency for delineating wetlands for both Section 404 CWA and Food Securities Act- "Swampbusters" on agricultural lands or on non-agricultural lands at the request of USDA program participants. The MOA defines agricultural lands as those lands intensively used and managed for the production of food and fiber to the extent that the natural vegetation has been removed and cannot be used to determine whether the area meets the applicable hydrophytic vegetation criteria in making a wetland delineation. Areas which meet this definition of agricultural lands may include intensively used and managed cropland, hayland, pastureland, orchards, vineyards and areas which support wetland crops.

Subtitle C- Wetland Conservation Section 325 of FAIRA96{see attachment 2}, "Clarification of Definition of Agricultural Lands In Memorandum of Agreement", has amended the definition of agricultural lands found in the MOA to include native pasture, rangelands, and other lands used to produce or support the production of livestock and tree farms.

The National Food Security Act Manual, Third Edition, 1996, Amendment 2 Part 525 defines agricultural land as land that is intensively used and managed for the production of food and fiber. Examples are cropland, hayland and pastures, including native pastures and rangeland, orchards,

vineyards, areas which support wetland crops, other lands used to produce or support the production of livestock, and small tree farms. Hayland is defined as land on which perennial plants are managed for hay production and harvest and is land on which the primary use is for the production of adapted close growing forage crops for harvest. Native pasture is defined as land which is used and managed primarily for production of native plants for forage. Pasture is defined as land on which the primary cover is introduced or native forage plants managed by using agronomic practices, such as regular fertilizer applications, liming, and weed control in addition to grazing management. Range or rangeland is defined as land on which the native vegetation (climax or natural potential plant community) is predominately grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, or shrubs. Rangelands include natural grassland, savannas, wet meadows and marshes, some deserts, tundra, and certain forb and shrub communities. Non-agricultural land is defined as land that is not covered by the definition of agricultural land and examples are forest land and urbanizing areas. Requests for determination of the presence of agricultural lands should be directed to the local NRCS District Conservationist.

Additionally, the Corps will review and revise some NRCS certified wetland maps. Unresolved differences between the Clean Water Act and FAIR96 will result in some maps with different areas of jurisdiction for each agency's program. Examples of differences that could result in wetland jurisdictional maps are areas that include abandoned Prior Converted Cropland (PC), certified NRCS wetland jurisdictional maps that are more than five years old, non-certified NRCS wetland jurisdictional maps, Artificial Wetlands (AW) or Converted Wetlands (CW). Requests for further information on potential differences for wetland jurisdictional maps should be directed to the local NRCS District Conservationist or the Corps representative.

#### DELAYED IMPLEMENTATION FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

Also by memorandum, dated January 6, 1994,

representatives of the four agencies that adopted the MOA have agreed to delay full implementation of the MOA in the San Francisco Bay Area until several legal, technical and policy issues are resolved between EPA and the Corps. When those issues are resolved NRCS will become the lead federal agency for wetland jurisdictional delineations on agricultural lands and on non-agricultural lands for U.S.D.A. program participants in the Bay Area for Section 404 CWA purposes. NRCS will continue to make wetland jurisdictional delineations for FSA purposes throughout the District boundary. The Bay Area is defined as the nine counties that front San Francisco Bay: Sonoma, Marin, Napa, Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo and San Francisco.

While the memorandum on delayed implementation specifies that the Corps and EPA will be the lead federal agency for all Section 404 CWA wetland delineations including those on agricultural lands, it does not change the provisions of the MOA that require the FSA manual be used to delineate wetlands on agricultural lands. Therefore, the Corps and EPA staff will use this manual when delineating wetlands on lands that meet the definition of agricultural lands within the nine Bay Area counties.

#### NRCS DISTRICT CONSERVATIONISTS WITHIN SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT

Please contact the local NRCS District Conservationist for requests for wetland jurisdictional delineations on agricultural lands or for clarification of the definition of agricultural lands. The following list contains the office location, telephone number and District Conservationist within the area of the Corp's San Francisco District:

Eureka Field Office, 5630 S. Broadway, Eureka, Ca. 95503 Telephone: (707) 444-9708 Fax: (707) 442-7514, James D. Komar- District Conservationist;

Napa Field Office, 1303 Jefferson St., Suite 500B, Napa, Ca. 94559 Telephone: (707) 252-4189 Fax: (707) 252-4219, Philip R. Blake- District

Conservationist;

Questions or comments on this notice should be directed to the local NRCS District Conservationist or to the Corps representative, Dan Martel, at telephone:(415)977-8435.

Petaluma Field Office, 1301 Redwood Highway, Suite 170, Petaluma, Ca. 94954 Telephone:(707)794-1242 Fax:(707)794-7902, Lisa Woo Shanks- District Conservationist;

Ukiah Field Office, 405 Orchard Ave., Ukiah, Ca. 95482 Telephone:(707)468-9223 Fax:(707)468-1292, Thomas E. Schott- District Conservationist;

Weaverville Field Office, No.3 Horseshoe Lane P.O. Box 1414, Weaverville, Ca. 96093 Telephone:(916) 623-3991 Fax:(916)623 2353, James S. Spear- District Conservationist;

Yreka Field Office, 215 Executive Court, Suite A, Yreka, Ca. 96097 Telephone:(916)842-6121 Fax:(916)842-1027, Jennifer L. Foster- District Conservationist;

Aptos Field Office, 3233 Valencia Ave., Suite B-6, Aptos, Ca. 95003 Telephone:(408)688-1562 Fax:(408)685-3602, Richard J. Casale- District Conservationist;

Concord Field Office, 5552 Clayton Road, Concord, Ca. 94521 Telephone:(510)672-4577 Fax:(510)672-8064 Larry R. Soenen- District Conservationist;

Hollister Service Center, 2337 Technology Way, Suite C, Hollister, Ca. 95023 Telephone:(408)636-8029 Fax:(408)636-7643, Jeffery M. Rodriguez- District Conservationist;

Livermore Field Office, 1560 Catalina Court, Livermore, Ca. 94550 Telephone:(510)447-0749 Fax:(510)443-2659, Terence L. Huff- District Conservationist;

Salinas Field Office, 635 Sanborn Place, Suite 7, Salinas, Ca. 93901 Telephone:(408)424-1036 Fax:(408)424-1027 Albert Cerna, Jr.- District Conservationist.

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# **ATTACHMENT 1**

527.12 Memorandum of Agreement Among EPA, USDA, USDI, and DOD



## **MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**

**AMONG THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, THE ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION AGENCY, THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, AND THE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**

**CONCERNING THE DELINEATION OF WETLANDS FOR  
PURPOSES OF SECTION 404 OF THE CLEAN WATER ACT AND  
SUBTITLE B OF THE FOOD SECURITY ACT**

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### **I. BACKGROUND**

The Departments of the Army, Agriculture, and the Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recognize fully that the protection of the Nation's remaining wetlands is an important objective that will be supported through the implementation of the Wetland Conservation (Swampbuster) provision of the Food Security Act (FSA) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). The agencies further recognize and value the important contribution of agricultural producers to our society, our economy, and our environment. We are committed to ensuring that Federal wetlands programs are administered in a manner that minimizes the impacts on affected landowners to the fullest possible extent consistent with the important goal of protecting wetlands. We are also committed to minimizing duplication and inconsistencies between Swampbuster and the CWA Section 404 program. On August 24, 1993, the Administration announced a comprehensive package of reforms that will improve both the protection of wetlands and make wetlands programs more fair and flexible for landowners, including the Nation's agriculture producers. This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) implements one of over 40 components of the Administration's Wetlands Plan.

### **II. PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY**

#### **A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this MOA is to specify the manner in which wetland delineations and certain other determinations of waters of the United States made by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) under the FSA will be relied upon for purposes of CWA Section 404. While this MOA will promote consistency between CWA and FSA wetlands programs, it is not intended in any way to diminish the protection of these important aquatic resources. In this regard, all signatory agencies to this MOA will ensure that wetlands programs are administered in a manner consistent with the objectives and requirements of applicable laws, implementing regulations, and guidance.

# **ATTACHMENT 1**

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**B. APPLICABILITY**

1. The Administrator of EPA has the ultimate authority to determine the geographic scope of waters of the United States subject to jurisdiction under the CWA, including the Section 404 regulatory program. Consistent with a current MOA between EPA and the Department of the Army, the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) conducts jurisdictional delineations associated with the day-to-day administration of the Section 404 program.
2. The Secretary of the USDA, acting through the Chief of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), has the ultimate authority to determine the geographic scope of wetlands for FSA purposes and to make delineations relative to the FSA, in consultation with the Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

**III. DEFINITION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS**

For the purposes of this MOA, the term "agricultural lands" means those lands intensively used and managed for the production of food or fiber to the extent that the natural vegetation has been removed and cannot be used to determine whether the area meets applicable hydrophytic vegetation criteria in making a wetland delineation.

- A. Areas that meet the above definition may include intensively used and managed cropland, hayland, pasture land, orchards, vineyards, and areas which support wetland crops (e.g., cranberries, taro, watercress, rice). For example, lands intensively used and managed for pasture or hayland where the natural vegetation has been removed and replaced with planted grasses or legumes such as ryegrass, bluegrass, or alfalfa, are considered agricultural lands for the purposes of this MOA.
- B. "Agricultural lands" do not include range lands, forest lands, wood lots, or tree farms. Further, lands where the natural vegetation has not been removed, even though that vegetation may be regularly grazed or mowed and collected as forage or fodder (e.g., uncultivated meadows and prairies, salt hay), are not considered agricultural lands for the purposes of this MOA.

Other definitions for the purposes of this MOA are listed below in Section VI.

**IV. ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITY**

- A. In accordance with the terms and procedures of this MOA, wetland delineations made by SCS on agricultural lands, in consultation with FWS, will be accepted by EPA and the Corps for the purposes of determining Section 404 wetland jurisdiction. In addition, EPA and the Corps will accept SCS wetland delineations

on non-agricultural lands that are either narrow bands immediately adjacent to, or small pockets interspersed among, agricultural lands. SCS is responsible for making wetland delineations for agricultural lands whether or not the person who owns, manages, or operates the land is a participant in USDA programs.

- B. Lands owned or operated by a USDA program participant that are not agricultural lands and for which a USDA program participant requests a wetland delineation, will be delineated by SCS in coordination with the Corps, or EPA as appropriate, and in consultation with FWS. Final wetland delineations conducted by SCS pursuant to the requirements of this paragraph shall not be revised by SCS except where an opportunity for coordination and consultation is provided to the other signatory agencies.
- C. SCS may conduct delineations of other waters for the purposes of Section 404 of the CWA, such as lakes, ponds, and streams, in coordination with the Corps, or EPA as appropriate, on lands on which SCS is otherwise engaged in wetland delineations pursuant to paragraphs IV.A or IV.B of this MOA. Delineations of "other waters" will not be made until the interagency oversight team convened pursuant to Section V.B.2 has agreed on appropriate local procedures and guidance for making such delineations.
- D. For agricultural lands, the signatory agencies will use the procedures for delineating wetlands as described in the National Food Security Act Manual, Third Edition (NFSAM). For areas that are not agricultural lands, SCS will use the 1987 Corps Wetland Delineation Manual, with current national Corps guidance, to make wetland delineations applicable to Section 404.
- E. Delineations on "agricultural lands" must be performed by personnel who are trained in the use of the NFSAM. Delineations on other lands and waters must be performed by personnel who are trained in the use of the 1987 Corps Wetland Delineation Manual. This MOA includes provisions for the appropriate interagency delineation training below in Section V.E.
- F. In the spirit of the agencies' commitment to develop agreed upon methods for use in making wetland delineations, subsequent revisions or amendments to the Corps 1987 manual or portions of the NFSAM affecting the wetland delineation procedures upon which this agreement is based will require the concurrence of the four signatory agencies.
- G. A final written wetland delineation made by SCS pursuant to the terms of this MOA will be adhered to by all the signatory agencies and will be effective for a period of five years from the date the delineation is made final, unless new information warrants revision of the delineation before the expiration date. Such new information may include, for example, data on landscape changes caused by a



major flood, or a landowner's notification of intent to abandon agricultural use and the return of wetland conditions on a prior converted cropland. In accordance with Section 1222 of the FSA, SCS will update wetland delineations on this five-year cycle. Circumstances under which SCS wetland delineations made prior to the effective date of this agreement will be considered as final for Section 404 purposes are addressed in Paragraph V.C.

- H. Within the course of administering their Swampbuster responsibilities, SCS and FWS will provide landowners/operators general written information (i.e., EPA/Corps fact sheets) regarding the CWA Section 404 program permit requirements, general permits, and exemptions. The SCS and FWS will not, however, provide opinions regarding the applicability of CWA Section 404 permit requirements or exemptions.
- I. USDA will maintain documentation of all final written SCS wetland delineations and record the appropriate label and boundary information on an official wetland delineation map. USDA will make this information available to the signatory agencies upon request.
- J. In pursuing enforcement activities, the signatory agencies will rely upon delineations made by the lead agency, as clarified below, providing a single Federal delineation for potential violations of Section 404 or Swampbuster. Nothing in this MOA will diminish, modify, or otherwise affect existing EPA and Corps enforcement authorities under the CWA and clarified in the 1989 "EPA/Army MOA Concerning Federal Enforcement for the Section 404 Program of the Clean Water Act." EPA, the Corps, and SCS may gather information based on site visits or other means to provide additional evidentiary support for a wetland delineation which is the subject of a potential or ongoing CWA Section 404 or Swampbuster enforcement action.
- K. For those lands where SCS has not made a final written wetland delineation, and where the Corps or EPA is pursuing a potential CWA violation, the lead agency for the CWA enforcement action will conduct a jurisdictional delineation for the purposes of Section 404 and such delineations will be used by SCS for determining Swampbuster jurisdiction and potential Swampbuster violations. For those lands where the Corps has not made a final written wetland delineation, and where SCS is pursuing a potential Swampbuster violation, SCS will make a final written wetland delineation consistent with Sections IV.A, IV.B, and IV.C of this MOA and provide copies to the Corps and EPA. Such delineations will be used by the Corps and EPA for the purpose of determining potential violations of the CWA. In circumstances in which either the Corps or EPA is pursuing a potential CWA violation on land that is subject to an ongoing SCS appeal, a wetland delineation will be conducted by the Corps or EPA in consultation with SCS and FWS.

527.12 Memorandum of Agreement Among EPA, USDA, and DOD, Cont'd

- L. In making wetland delineations, the agencies recognize that discharges of dredged or fill material that are not authorized under Section 404 cannot eliminate Section 404 jurisdiction, and that wetlands that were converted as a result of unauthorized discharges remain subject to Section 404 regulation.

V. PROCEDURES

Accurate and consistent wetland delineations are critical to the success of this MOA.

For this reason, the signatory agencies will work cooperatively at the field level to:

- 1) achieve interagency concurrence on mapping conventions used by SCS for wetland delineations on agricultural lands, 2) provide EPA and Corps programmatic review of SCS delineations, and 3) certify wetland delineations in accordance with Section 1222(a)(2) of the FSA, as amended. The following sections describe the procedures that will be followed to accomplish these objectives.

A. MAPPING CONVENTIONS

1. Each SCS State Conservationist will take the lead in convening representatives of the Corps, EPA, FWS, and SCS to obtain the written concurrence of each of the signatory agencies, within 120 calendar days of the effective date of this MOA, on a set of mapping conventions for use in making wetland delineations. Only mapping conventions concurred upon by all signatory agencies will be used by SCS for wetland delineations.
2. If interagency consensus on mapping conventions is not reached within 120 days of the date of this MOA, the State Conservationist will refer documentation of the unresolved issues to the Chief of SCS. The Chief of SCS will immediately forward copies of the State Conservationist's documentation of unresolved issues to the Corps Director of Civil Works; the EPA Director of the Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds; and the FWS Director. Immediately thereafter, the Chief of SCS or an appropriate designee will lead necessary discussions to achieve interagency concurrence on resolution of outstanding issues, and will forward documentation of the resolution to the State Conservationist and the appropriate Headquarters offices of the signatory agencies.
3. Once interagency concurrence on mapping conventions is obtained, such mapping conventions will be used immediately in place of the earlier mapping conventions.
4. Agreed-upon mapping conventions developed at the state level will be documented and submitted, for each state, through the Chief of SCS to the Headquarters of each of the signatory agencies. State-level agreements will be reviewed by the Headquarters of the signatory agencies for the purpose of ensuring national consistency.

B. DELINEATION PROCESS REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT

1. This MOA emphasizes the need to ensure consistency in the manner in which wetlands are identified for CWA and FSA purposes, and provides a number of mechanisms to increase meaningful interagency coordination and consultation in order for the agencies to work toward meeting this goal. In this regard, the agencies believe it is critical that efforts for achieving consistency be carefully monitored and evaluated. Consequently, this MOA establishes a monitoring and review process that will be used to provide for continuous improvement in the wetland delineation process specified in this MOA.
2. EPA will lead the signatory agencies in establishing interagency oversight teams at the state level to conduct periodic review of wetland delineations conducted under the provisions of this MOA. These reviews will include delineations done by SCS pursuant to Sections IV.A, IV.B, and IV.C of this MOA and delineations done by EPA or the Corps pursuant to Section IV.K. of this MOA. These reviews also will include changes to wetland delineations resulting from the SCS appeals process, as well as disagreements regarding allocation of responsibility. These reviews will occur, at a minimum, on a quarterly basis for the first year, on a semi-annual basis for the second year, and annually thereafter. In addition, a review will be initiated whenever one or more of the signatory agencies believes a significant issue needs to be addressed. The purpose of each review will be to evaluate the accuracy of an appropriate sample of wetland delineations. When feasible, this will include actual field verifications of wetland delineations. Should the interagency oversight team identify issues regarding implementation of this MOA or wetland delineations conducted under the provisions of this MOA, the team will work to resolve those issues and reach agreement on any necessary corrective actions. Each review, and any necessary corrective action, will be documented in a report to be distributed to the signatory agencies' appropriate field and Headquarters offices.
3. In situations in which the interagency oversight team identifies and reports unresolved issues concerning wetland delineations conducted under the provisions of this MOA, including changes to wetland delineations resulting from the SCS appeals process, the Headquarters offices of the signatory agencies will informally review the issue and work to reach agreement on any necessary corrective actions. This informal process notwithstanding, the EPA Regional Administrator or the Corps District Engineer may, at any time, propose to designate a geographic area as a "special case".

4. Similar to the terms of the current Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of the Army and the EPA Concerning the Determination of the Geographic Jurisdiction of the Section 404 Program and the Application of the Exemptions under Section 404(f) of the CWA, the EPA Regional Administrator or the Corps District Engineer may propose to designate a geographic area, or a particular wetland type within a designated geographic area, as a special case. A special case may be designated only after the interagency oversight team (EPA, Corps, SCS, and FWS) has reviewed the relevant issues and been unable to reach a consensus on an appropriate resolution. Special cases will be designated by an easily identifiable political or geographic subdivision, such as a township, county, parish, state, EPA Region, or Corps division or district, and will be marked on maps or using some other clear format and provided to the appropriate EPA, Corps, FWS, and SCS field offices. Proposed designations of special cases will not be effective until approved by EPA or Corps Headquarters, as appropriate.
5. Upon proposing a special case, the EPA Regional Administrator or Corps District Engineer, as appropriate, will notify the appropriate SCS State Conservationist in writing. Following notification of the proposed designation, SCS will not make wetland delineations for the purposes of CWA jurisdiction within the proposed special case for a period of 20 working days from the date of the notification. SCS may proceed to make wetland delineations for CWA purposes in the proposed special case after the 20-day period if the SCS State Conservationist has not been notified by the EPA Regional Administrator or Corps District Engineer of approval of the proposed special case designation by EPA Headquarters or the Corps Director of Civil Works, as appropriate.
6. Following approval of the proposed special case, the Corps, or EPA as appropriate, will make final CWA wetland delineations in the special case area, rather than SCS. In addition, the referring field office (i.e., either the EPA Regional Administrator or Corps District Engineer) will develop draft guidance relevant to the specific issues raised by the special case and forward the draft guidance to its Headquarters office. The Headquarters office of the agency which designated the special case will develop final guidance after consulting with the signatory agencies' Headquarters offices. EPA concurrence will be required for final guidance for any special case designated by the Corps. Special cases remain in effect until final guidance is issued by the Headquarters office of the agency which designated the special case or the designation is withdrawn by the EPA Regional Administrator or Corps District Engineer, as appropriate.

C. RELIANCE ON PREVIOUS SCS WETLAND DELINEATIONS FOR CWA PURPOSES

1. Section 1222 of the FSA, as amended by the Food Agriculture Conservation and Trade Act, provides that SCS will certify SCS wetland delineations made prior to November 28, 1990. The intent of this process is to ensure the accuracy of wetland delineations conducted prior to November 28, 1990, for the purposes of the FSA. This certification process also will provide a useful basis for establishing reliance on wetland delineations for CWA purposes. All certifications done after the effective date of this MOA that are done using mapping conventions will use the agreed-upon mapping conventions pursuant to Section V.A of this MOA.
2. Written SCS wetland delineations for lands identified in Section IV.A of this MOA conducted prior to the effective date of this MOA will be used for purposes of establishing CWA jurisdiction, subject to the provisions of Section V.C.3 below. If such SCS wetland delineations are subsequently modified or revised through updated certification, these modifications or revisions will supersede the previous delineations for purposes of establishing CWA jurisdiction. Written SCS wetland delineations for lands identified in Sections IV.B and IV.C of this MOA conducted prior to the effective date of this MOA will require coordination with the Corps, or EPA as appropriate, before being used for purposes of determining CWA jurisdiction.
3. As part of the certification effort, SCS will establish priorities to certify SCS wetland delineations. In addition to responding to requests from individual landowners who feel their original wetland determinations were made in error, SCS will give priority to certifying those wetland delineations where at least two of the four signatory agencies represented on the interagency oversight team convened pursuant to Section V.B.2 of this MOA agree that SCS wetland delineations in a particular area, or a generic class of SCS wetland delineations in a particular area, raise issues regarding their accuracy based on current guidance. These priority areas will be identified only after mapping conventions are agreed upon pursuant to Section V.A of this MOA. Identification of these high priority certification needs shall be made at the level of the SCS State Conservationist, FWS Regional Director, EPA Regional Administrator, and the Corps District Engineer. Following identification of these high priority certification needs, the SCS State Conservationist will immediately notify the affected landowner(s), by letter, that the relevant SCS wetland delineations have been identified as a high priority for being certified under Section 1222 of the FSA. In addition, the notification will inform the landowner that while previous wetland delineations remain valid for

purposes of the FSA until certification or certification update is completed, the landowner will need to contact the Corps before proceeding with discharges of dredged or fill material. This communication by the landowner will enable the Corps to review the wetland delineation to establish whether it can be used for purposes of CWA jurisdiction. The SCS State Conservationist will initiate, within 30 calendar days of landowner notification, corrective measures to resolve the wetland delineation accuracy problem.

D. APPEALS

Landowners for whom SCS makes wetland delineations for either Swampbuster or Section 404 will be afforded the opportunity to appeal such wetland delineations through the SCS appeals process. In circumstances where an appeal is made and the State Conservationist is considering a change in the original delineation, the State Conservationist will notify the Corps District Engineer and the EPA Regional Administrator to provide the opportunity for their participation and input on the appeal. FWS also will be consulted consistent with the requirements of current regulations. The Corps and EPA reserve the right, on a case-by-case basis, to determine that a revised delineation resulting from an appeal is not valid for purposes of Section 404 jurisdiction.

E. TRAINING

1. SCS, in addition to FWS and EPA, will continue to participate in the interagency wetland delineation training sponsored by the Corps, which is based on the most current manual used to delineate wetlands for purposes of Section 404. Completion of this training will be a prerequisite for field staff of all signatory agencies who delineate wetlands on non-agricultural lands using the 1987 Corps Wetland Delineation Manual.
2. The interagency wetland delineation training will address agency wetland delineation responsibilities as defined by this MOA, including SCS NFSAM wetland delineation procedures.
3. Field offices of the signatory agencies are encouraged to provide supplemental interagency wetland delineation training (i.e., in addition to that required in paragraph IV.E), as necessary, to prepare SCS field staff for making Section 404 wetland delineations. For training on the use of the 1987 Corps Wetland Delineation Manual, such supplemental training will rely on the training materials used for the Corps delineation training program and will provide an equivalent level of instruction.

## VI. DEFINITIONS

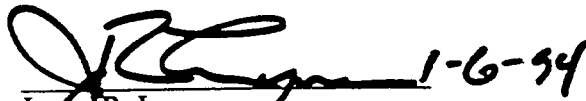
- A. "Coordination" means that SCS will contact the Corps, or EPA as appropriate, and provide an opportunity for review, comment, and approval of the findings of SCS prior to making a final delineation. The Corps, or EPA as appropriate, will review the proposed delineation and respond to SCS regarding its acceptability for CWA Section 404 purposes within 45 days of receipt of all necessary information. SCS will not issue a final delineation until agreement is reached between SCS and the Corps or EPA, as appropriate.
- B. "Consultation" means that SCS, consistent with current provisions of the FSA, will provide FWS opportunity for full participation in the action being taken and for timely review and comment on the findings of SCS prior to a final wetland delineation pursuant to the requirements of the FSA.
- C. A "wetland delineation" is any determination of the presence of wetlands and their boundaries.
- D. A "special case" for the purposes of this MOA refers to those geographic areas or wetland types where the Corps or EPA will make final CWA wetland delineations.
- E. "Signatory agencies" means the EPA and the Departments of Army (acting through the Corps), Agriculture (acting through SCS), and Interior (acting through FWS).
- F. "USDA program participant" means individual landowners/operators eligible to receive USDA program benefits covered under Title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990.

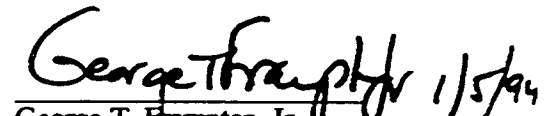
## VII. GENERAL


- A. The policy and procedures contained within this MOA do not create any rights, either substantive or procedural, enforceable by any party regarding an enforcement action brought by the United States. Deviation or variance from the administrative procedures included in this MOA will not constitute a defense for violators or others concerned with any Section 404 enforcement action.
- B. Nothing in this MOA is intended to diminish, modify, or otherwise affect statutory or regulatory authorities of any of the signatory agencies. All formal guidance interpreting this MOA and background materials upon which this MOA is based will be issued jointly by the agencies.

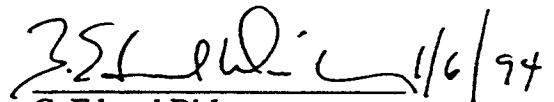
527.12 Memorandum of Agreement Among EPA, USDA, and DOD, Cont'd

- C. Nothing in this MOA will be construed as indicating a financial commitment by SCS, the Corps, EPA, or FWS for the expenditure of funds except as authorized in specific appropriations.
- D. This MOA will take effect on the date of the last signature below and will continue in effect until modified or revoked by agreement of all signatory agencies, or revoked by any of the signatory agencies alone upon 90 days written notice. Modifications to this MOA may be made by mutual agreement and Headquarters level approval by all the signatory agencies. Such modifications will take effect upon signature of the modified document by all the signatory agencies.
- E. The signatory agencies will refer delineation requests to the appropriate agency pursuant to this MOA.

 1-6-94  
James R. Lyons  
Assistant Secretary for Natural  
Resources and Environment  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

 1/5/94  
George T. Hampton, Jr.  
Assistant Secretary for Fish and  
Wildlife and Parks  
U.S. Department of the Interior

 1-4-94  
Robert Perciasepe  
Assistant Administrator for Water  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

 1/6/94  
G. Edward Dickey  
Acting Assistant Secretary of the  
Army for Civil Works  
U.S. Department of the Army



"(c) REVIEW.—If the corrective action is not fully implemented not later than 1 year after the responsible persons receive the information, the Secretary may conduct a review of the status of compliance of the persons with the conservation plan and this subtitle."

SEC. 317. WIND EROSION ESTIMATION PILOT PROJECT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall conduct a pilot project to review, and modify as appropriate, the use of wind erosion factors under the highly erodible conservation requirements of subtitle B of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3811 et seq.).

(b) SELECTION OF COUNTRIES AND PRODUCERS.—The pilot project shall be conducted for producers in those countries that—

(1) have approximately 100 percent of their cropland determined to be highly erodible under title XII of the Act;

(2) have a reasonable likelihood that the use of wind erosion factors under title XII of the Act have resulted in an inequitable application of the highly erodible land requirements of title XII of the Act; and

(3) if the use of the land classification system under section 1201(a)(9)(A) of the Act (as redesignated by section 301(a)(1)) may result in a more accurate delineation of the cropland.

(c) ERRORS IN DELINEATION.—If the Secretary determines that a significant error has occurred in delineating cropland under the pilot project, the Secretary shall, at the request of the owner or operators of the cropland, conduct a new delineation of the cropland using the most accurate available delineation process, as determined by the Secretary.

## Subtitle C—Wetland Conservation

SEC. 321. PROGRAM INELIGIBILITY.

(a) PROGRAM INELIGIBILITY.—Section 1221 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3821) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (e); and

(2) by striking the section heading and all that follow through the end of subsection (a) and inserting the following:

"SEC. 1221. PROGRAM INELIGIBILITY.

"(a) PRODUCTION ON CONVERTED WETLAND.—Except as provided in this subtitle and notwithstanding any other provision of law, any person who in any crop year produces an agricultural commodity on converted wetland, as determined by the Secretary shall be—

"(1) in violation of this section; and

"(2) ineligible for loans or payments in an amount determined by the Secretary to be proportionate to the severity of the violation.

"(b) INELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN LOANS AND PAYMENTS.—If a person is determined to have committed a violation under subsection (a) during a crop year, the Secretary shall determine which of and the amount of, the following loans and payments for which the person shall be ineligible:

"(1) Contract payments under a production flexibility contract, marketing assistance loans, and any type of price support or payment made available under the Agricultural Market

Transition Act, the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714 et seq.), or any other Act.

"(2) A loan made or guaranteed under the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 et seq.) or any other provision of law administered by the Consolidated Farm Service Agency, if the Secretary determines that the proceeds of the loan will be used for a purpose that will contribute to conversion of a wetland (other than as provided in this subtitle) to produce an agricultural commodity.

"(3) During the crop year:

"(A) A payment made pursuant to a contract entered into under the environmental quality incentives program under chapter 4 of subtitle D.

"(B) A payment under any other provision of subtitle

D.

"(C) A payment under section 401 or 402 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2201 and 2202).

"(D) A payment, loan, or other assistance under section 3 or 8 of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (16 U.S.C. 1003 and 1006a)."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 1221(c) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (as redesignated by subsection (a)(1)) is amended—

(A) by striking "Except";

(B) by striking "subsequent to the date of enactment of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990" and inserting "beginning after November 28, 1990," and

(C) by striking "subsections (a) (1) through (3)" and inserting "subsection (b)".

(2) Section 1221 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (as amended by subsection (a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(d) PRIOR LOANS.—This section shall not apply to a loan described in subsection (b) made before December 23, 1985."

SEC. 322. DELINEATION OF WETLANDS; EXEMPTIONS TO PROGRAM INELIGIBILITY.

(a) DELINEATION OF WETLANDS.—Section 1222 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3822) is amended by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following:

"(a) DELINEATION BY THE SECRETARY.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b) and paragraph (6), the Secretary shall delineate, determine, and certify all wetlands located on subject land on a farm.

"(2) WETLAND DELINEATION MAPS.—The Secretary shall delineate wetlands on wetland delineation maps. On the request of a person, the Secretary shall make a reasonable effort to make an on-site wetland determination prior to delineation.

"(3) CERTIFICATION.—On providing notice to affected persons, the Secretary shall—

"(A) certify whether a map is sufficient for the purpose of making a determination of ineligibility for program benefits under section 1221; and

"(B) provide an opportunity to appeal the certification prior to the certification becoming final.

"(4) DURATION OF CERTIFICATION.—A final certification made under paragraph (3) shall remain valid and in effect as long as the area is devoted to an agricultural use or until such time as the person affected by the certification requests review of the certification by the Secretary.

"(5) REVIEW OF MAPPING ON APPEAL.—In the case of an appeal of the Secretary's certification, the Secretary shall review and certify the accuracy of the mapping of all land subject to the appeal to ensure that the subject land has been accurately delineated. Prior to rendering a decision on the appeal, the Secretary shall conduct an on-site inspection of the subject land on a farm.

"(6) RELIANCE ON PRIOR CERTIFIED DELINEATION.—No person shall be adversely affected because of having taken an action based on a previous certified wetland delineation by the Secretary. The delineation shall not be subject to a subsequent wetland certification or delineation by the Secretary unless requested by the person under paragraph (4)."

"(b) EXEMPTIONS.—Section 1222 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3822) is amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

"(b) EXEMPTIONS.—No person shall become ineligible under section 1221 for program loans or payments under the following circumstances:

"(1) As the result of the production of an agricultural commodity on the following lands:

"(A) A converted wetland if the conversion of the wetland was commenced before December 23, 1985.

"(B) Land that is a nontidal drainage or irrigation ditch excavated in upland.

"(C) A wet area created by a water-delivery system for irrigation, irrigation system, or application of water for irrigation.

"(D) A wetland on which the owner or operator of a farm or ranch uses normal cropping or ranching practices to produce an agricultural commodity in a manner that is consistent for the area where the production is possible as a result of a natural condition, such as drought, and is without action by the producer that destroys a natural wetland characteristic.

"(E) Land that is an artificial lake or pond created by excavating or diking land (that is not a wetland) to collect and retain water and that is used primarily for livestock watering, fish production, irrigation, wildlife, fire control, flood control, cranberry growing, or rice production or as a settling pond.

"(F) A wetland that is temporarily or incidentally created as a result of adjacent development activity.

"(G) A converted wetland if the original conversion of the wetland was commenced before December 23, 1985, and the Secretary determines the wetland characteristic returned after that date as a result of—

"(i) the lack of maintenance of drainage, dikes, levees, or similar structures;

"(ii) a lack of management of the lands containing the wetland; or

"(H) circumstances beyond the control of the person, or

"(I) A converted wetland, if—

"(i) the converted wetland was determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service to have been manipulated for the production of an agricultural commodity or forage prior to December 23, 1985, and was returned to wetland conditions through a voluntary, subsequent to that determination, or creation action site conditions and the restoration, enhancement, or creation action have been adequately documented by the Natural Resources Conservation Service;

"(ii) the proposed conservation action is approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service prior to implementation; and

"(iv) the extent of the proposed conversion is limited so that the conditions will be at least equivalent to the wetland functions and values that existed prior to implementation of the voluntary wetland restoration, enhancement, or creation action.

"(2) For the conversion of the following:

"(A) An artificial lake or pond created by excavating or diking land that is not a wetland to collect and retain water and that is used primarily for livestock watering, fish production, irrigation, wildlife, fire control, flood control, cranberry growing, rice production, or as a settling pond.

"(B) A wetland that is temporarily or incidentally created as a result of adjacent development activity.

"(C) A wetland on which the owner or operator of a farm or ranch uses normal cropping or ranching practices to produce an agricultural commodity in a manner that is consistent for the area where the production is possible as a result of a natural condition, such as drought, and is without action by the producer that destroys a natural wetland characteristic.

"(D) A wetland previously identified as a converted wetland if the original conversion of the wetland was commenced before December 23, 1985, but that the Secretary determines returned to wetland status after that date as a result of—

"(i) the lack of maintenance of drainage, dikes, levees, or similar structures;

"(ii) a lack of management of the lands containing the wetland; or

"(iii) circumstances beyond the control of the person.

"(E) A wetland, if—

"(i) the wetland was determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service to have been manipulated for the production of an agricultural commodity or forage prior to December 23, 1985, and was returned to wetland conditions through a voluntary restoration, enhancement, or creation action subsequent to that determination;

LAW OF 104th CONG.—2nd SESS.

Apr. 4

"(ii) technical determinations regarding the prior site conditions and the restoration, enhancement, or creation action have been adequately documented by the Natural Resources Conservation Service;

"(iii) the proposed conversion action is approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service prior to implementation; and

"(iv) the extent of the proposed conversion is limited so that the conditions will be at least equivalent to the wetland functions and values that existed prior to implementation of the voluntary wetland restoration, enhancement, or creation action."

(c) IDENTIFICATION OF MINIMAL EFFECT EXEMPTIONS.—Section 1222 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3822) is amended by striking subsection (d) and inserting the following:

"(d) IDENTIFICATION OF MINIMAL EFFECT EXEMPTIONS.—For purposes of applying the minimal effect exemption under subsection (b)(1), the Secretary shall identify by regulation categorical minimal effect exemptions on a regional basis to assist persons in avoiding a violation of the ineligibility provisions of section 1221. The Secretary shall ensure that employees of the Department of Agriculture who administer this subtitle receive appropriate training to properly apply the minimal effect exemptions determined by the Secretary.

(d) MINIMAL EFFECT AND MITIGATION EXEMPTIONS.—Section 1222 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3822) is amended by striking subsection (f) and inserting the following:

"(f) MINIMAL EFFECT, MITIGATION.—The Secretary shall exempt a person from the ineligibility provisions of section 1221 for any action associated with the production of an agricultural commodity on a converted wetland, or the conversion of a wetland, if 1 of more of the following conditions apply, as determined by the Secretary:

"(1) The action, individually and in connection with all other similar actions authorized by the Secretary in the area, will have a minimal effect on the functional hydrological and biological value of the wetlands in the area, including, but not limited to, waterfowl and wildlife.

"(2) The wetland and the wetland values, acreage, and functions are mitigated by the person through the restoration of a converted wetland, the enhancement of an existing wetland, or the creation of a new wetland, and the restoration, enhancement, or creation is—

"(A) in accordance with a wetland conservation plan;

"(B) in advance of, or concurrent with, the action;

"(C) not at the expense of the Federal Government;

"(D) in the case of enhancement or restoration of wetlands, on not greater than a 1-for-1 acreage basis unless more acreage is needed to provide equivalent function and values that will be lost as a result of the wetland conversion to be mitigated;

"(E) in the case of creation of wetlands, on not greater than a 1-for-1 acreage basis if more acreage is needed to provide equivalent functions and values that will be lost as a result of the wetland conversion that is mitigated;

"(F) on lands in the same general area of the watershed as the converted wetland; and

Apr. 4

AGRICULTURE REFORM ACT

"(G) with respect to the restored, enhanced, or created wetland, made subject to an easement that—

"(i) is recorded on public land records;

"(ii) remains in force for as long as the converted wetland for which the restoration, enhancement, or creation to be mitigated remains in agricultural use or is not returned to its original wetland classification with equivalent functions and values; and

"(iii) prohibits making alterations to the restored, enhanced, or created wetland that lower the wetland's functions and values.

"(3) The wetland was converted after December 23, 1985, but before November 28, 1990, and the wetland values, acreage, and functions are mitigated by the producer through the requirements of subparagraphs (A), (B), (C), (D), (F), and (G) of paragraph (2).

"(4) The action was authorized by a permit issued under section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1344) and the wetland values, acreage, and functions of the converted wetland were adequately mitigated for the purposes of this subtitle."

(e) REFERENCES TO PRODUCER.—Section 1222(g) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3822(g)) is amended by striking "producer" and inserting "person".

(f) GOOD FAITH EXEMPTION.—Section 1222 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3822) is amended by striking subsection (h) and inserting the following:

"(h) GOOD FAITH EXEMPTION.—

"(1) EXEMPTION DESCRIBED.—The Secretary may waive a person's ineligibility under section 1221 for program loans, payments, and benefits as the result of the conversion of a wetland subsequent to November 28, 1990, or the production of an agricultural commodity on a converted wetland, if the Secretary determines that the person has acted in good faith and without intent to violate this subtitle.

"(2) PERIOD FOR COMPLIANCE.—The Secretary shall provide a person who the Secretary determines has acted in good faith with and without intent to violate this subtitle with a reasonable period, but not to exceed 1 year, during which to implement the measures and practices necessary to be considered to actively restoring the subject wetland."

(g) RESTORATION.—Section 1222(i) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3822(i)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: "or has otherwise mitigated for the loss of wetland values, as determined by the Secretary, through restoration, enhancement, or creation of wetland values in the same general area of the local watershed as the converted wetland."

(h) DETERMINATIONS.—Section 1222 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3822) is amended by striking subsection (j) and inserting the following:

"(j) DETERMINATIONS.—RESTORATION AND MITIGATION PLANS; MONITORING ACTIVITIES.—Technical determinations, the development of restoration and mitigation plans, and monitoring activities under this section shall be made by the National Resources Conservation Service."

(i) MITIGATION BANKING.—Section 1222 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3822) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(k) MITIGATION BANKING PROGRAM.—Using authorities available to the Secretary, the Secretary may operate a pilot program for mitigation banking of wetlands to assist persons to increase the efficiency of agricultural operations while protecting wetland functions and values. Subsection (D)(2)(C) shall not apply to this subsection."

SEC. 323. CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION REQUIREMENTS.

Section 1223 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3823) is repealed.

SEC. 324. APPLICATION OF PROGRAM INELIGIBILITY TO AFFILIATED PERSONS.

The Food Security Act of 1985 (as amended by section 323) is amended by inserting after section 1222 (16 U.S.C. 3822) the following:

"SEC. 1223. AFFILIATED PERSONS.

"If a person is affected by a reduction in benefits under section 1221 and the affected person is affiliated with other persons for the purpose of receiving the benefits, the benefits of each affiliated person shall be reduced under section 1221 in proportion to the interest held by the affiliated person."

SEC. 326. CLARIFICATION OF DEFINITION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT.

(a) AGRICULTURAL LANDS.—For purposes of implementing the memorandum of agreement entered into between the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of the Army on January 6, 1994, relating to the delineation of wetlands, the term "agricultural lands" shall include—

(1) native pasture, rangelands, and other lands used to produce or support the production of livestock; and

(2) tree farms.

(b) WETLAND CONSERVATION.—Subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to the delineation of wetlands under subtitle C of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3821 et seq.) or to the enforcement of the subtitle.

(c) SUCCESSOR MEMORANDUM.—Subsection (a) shall apply to any amendment to or successor of the memorandum of agreement described in subsection (a).

SEC. 326. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This subtitle and the amendments made by this subtitle shall become effective 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

## Subtitle D—Environmental Conservation Acreage Reserve Program

SEC. 331. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION ACREAGE RESERVE PROGRAM.

Section 1230 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3830) is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 1230. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION ACREAGE RESERVE PROGRAM.

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—During the 1996 through 2002 calendar years, the Secretary shall establish an environmental conservation acreage reserve program (referred to in this section as 'ECARP') to be implemented through contracts and the acquisition of easements to assist owners and operators of farms and ranches to conserve and enhance soil, water, and related natural resources, including grazing land, wetland, and wildlife habitat.

"(2) MEANS.—The Secretary shall carry out the ECARP by—

"(A) providing for the long-term protection of environmentally sensitive land; and

"(B) providing technical and financial assistance to farmers and ranchers to—

"(i) improve the management and operation of the farms and ranches; and

"(ii) reconcile productivity and profitability with protection and enhancement of the environment.

"(3) PROGRAMS.—The ECARP shall consist of—

"(A) the conservation reserve program established under subchapter B;

"(B) the wetlands reserve program established under subchapter C; and

"(C) the environmental quality incentives program established under chapter 4.

"(b) ADMINISTRATION.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the ECARP, the Secretary shall enter into contracts with owners and operators and acquire interests in land through easements from owners, as provided in this chapter and chapter 4.

"(2) PRIOR ENROLLMENTS.—Acreage enrolled in the conservation reserve or wetlands reserve program prior to the date of enactment of this paragraph shall be considered to be placed into the ECARP.

"(c) CONSERVATION PRIORITY AREAS.—

"(1) DESIGNATION.—The Secretary may designate watersheds, multistate areas, or regions of special environmental sensitivity as conservation priority areas that are eligible for enhanced assistance under this chapter and chapter 4.

"(2) ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may designate areas as conservation priority areas to assist, to the maximum extent practicable, agricultural producers within the conservation priority areas to comply with nonpoint source pollution requirements under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) and other Federal and State environmental laws and to meet other conservation needs.

"(3) PRODUCERS.—The Secretary may provide technical assistance, cost-share payments, and incentive payments to producers in a conservation priority area under this chapter and chapter 4 based on—

"(A) the significance of the soil, water, wildlife habitat, and related natural resource problems in a watershed, multistate area, or region; and